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ABSTRACT

This presentation discusses strategies upon which to base teacher incentives, and also assumptions within these strategies. The first strategy, influencing teacher turnover rates so that good teachers remain in the profession longer and poor teachers leave teaching sooner, includes consideration of occupational rewards, career structure, benefits, stress, organizational features, and teacher evaluation. The second strategy, attracting higher-quality entrants into teaching from the ranks of talented new college graduates and from the pool of talented persons in other jobs, considers the college freshmen pool, teacher salaries, working conditions, and hiring practices. The third strategy, raising the average performance of already-employed teachers by inducing them to upgrade or use their capabilities more effectively by providing incentive pay, includes discussion of teacher stress, teacher isolation, incentives, and rewards. The fourth strategy, raising the average performance of already-employed teachers by providing both the inducement and the structured opportunities for them to upgrade their capabilities, considers organizational factors, opportunities for professional development, and evaluation and professional improvement. (CB)

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TEACHER INCENTIVES: GOALS, STRATEGIES, ASSUMPTIONS AND THEIR FEASIBILITY

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GOALS OF INCENTIVE SYSTEMS

- o improving teaching and learning;
- o improving schools as organizations in order to make schools more effective places to teach and to learn;
- o changing the composition of the teacher work force by attracting more outstanding teachers and/or retaining talented teachers; and
- o strengthening community confidence in the schools.

STRATEGIES AND ASSUMPTIONS

STRATEGY 1

INFLUENCING TEACHER TURNOVER RATES SO THAT "GOOD" TEACHERS REMAIN IN THE PROFESSION LONGER, AND "POOR" TEACHERS LEAVE TEACHING SOONER.

Problem:

A study by Schlechty and Vance found that those teachers with high ability are more likely to leave teaching than those with low ability. Another study by Rosenholtz (1985) found that after six years, only 37% of teachers in the top 10% of measured verbal ability remained in the teacher work force, while more than 60% of those in the lowest 10% were still teaching .

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The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America found 46% of the former teachers had been in the profession less than ten years; that frequent job stress is a key indicator of a teacher who may leave; that former teachers and those most likely to leave often believe the intellectual challenge is greater in other fields; and that expressed dissatisfaction is also a predictor.

ASSUMPTIONS:

A. **TEACHERS' DESIRES TO REMAIN IN OR LEAVE TEACHING ARE DETERMINED, IN PART, BY THE RELATIVE REWARDS AVAILABLE TO THEM IN TEACHING AND IN OTHER OCCUPATIONS.**

LOW SALARIES

The flow of good teachers out of teaching is attributable partly to the greater economic rewards in other fields. In the Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America, 60% of the teachers reported that low pay was their main reason for leaving the profession. Other polls have also reported that the most common reason given for leaving teaching is low salary (Gallup, 1984; Mills & Stout, 1985).

The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers shows that more than 35% of teachers who have left the profession now earn $30,000 a year, while a little more than 10% of current teachers report earnings at that level. It is apparent that it is necessary to raise the base salaries of teachers in order to encourage more highly qualified people to enter and remain in teaching (IFG Policy Notes, 1985a).

LACK OF CAREER STRUCTURE

Teachers have little motivation to make a career of teaching. There are few rewards available to the experienced teacher that are not available to the inexperienced. Most of the psychic rewards of teaching are as accessible to the relatively inexperienced teacher as to the experienced one. Neither are experienced teachers likely to realize meaningful increases in responsibility even though research shows that these can be powerful motivators.

The Holmes Group Consortium (Report on Education Research, April 23, 1986) stated their belief that teaching must make room for top practitioners who can lead the teaching field to improvement. The group recommended that a differentiated structure be developed in the teaching ranks, led by "career professionals," highly competent teachers who have demonstrated a commitment to teaching.

Without such differentiation within the ranks of teachers, teachers' opportunities for recognition and status are limited. In order to have opportunities for increased status, teachers must leave the classroom for full-time administration, supervision, or curriculum development (Burden, 1985). Classroom teachers who do not choose to become administrators or counselors will fulfill the same job description the day before retirement as they did on their initial day of employment.

Job challenges for teachers are usually quite constrained by the structure of the schools. Leadership and new learning bring few external rewards within the school and are not particularly effective ways for teachers to advance their careers. In fact, a teacher's advances in these areas may not even be noticed by

others in the school. When they are noticed, leadership activities may lead to conflict with school officials who may see them as a threat to their own leadership and career advancement (Chapman & Lowther, 1982).

In addition to being blocked from moving up, teachers have limited opportunities for growing professionally. Teaching roles are so circumscribed that they do not generally allow teachers to consult with other teachers and administrators, inquire systematically about teaching, create instructional materials, aid other teachers' improvement, write about teaching, administer special programs, or develop special projects. All too often, when teachers do assume additional responsibilities, there is no money in the district budget to pay an additional stipend for their time, creativity, or initiative (ASCD, 1985).

B. THE "BENEFITS PACKAGE" AND WORKING CONDITIONS CAN BE IMPROVED AND INCENTIVES CAN BE IDENTIFIED THAT WILL INFLUENCE "GOOD" TEACHERS TO REMAIN IN THE CLASSROOM.

BENEFITS

Each currently employed teacher and each prospective teacher is confronted with a "package" of benefits consisting of both the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and the conditions that comprise the occupation of teaching. The teaching "package" is compared with the "packages" available in alternative occupations. The decision to enter or remain in teaching hinges upon which total package is preferable (Barro, 1985).

While many of the former teachers surveyed by the Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers admitted that teaching offers better fringe benefits in terms of vacations and job security than do many professions, the majority believed that salaries, professional prestige, control over one's work, equipment availability, and the chance to be stimulated intellectually are all increased in their new vocations.

STRESS

The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers found that the amount of stress teachers experience once they leave the profession drops dramatically. Fifty-seven percent of former teachers said they felt "great" stress in the classroom, but only 22% said they experience that kind of pressure in their current jobs. In examining what career change has meant to former teachers, the survey found that along with reduced stress, higher pay and sharply increased job satisfaction make it highly unlikely that those individuals would return to the classroom.

ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES CONTRIBUTE TO DISSATISFACTION

A study of California's schools (Commons, 1985) identified problems that have eroded the attractiveness and contribution of the teaching profession. Among them were:

- low salaries and subordinate status within the schools;
- loss of public esteem for the work and those who perform it;
- inadequate facilities, supplies, and support materials;
- isolation in the classroom, with rare opportunities or incentives for collegiality;
- increased conflict between teachers and administrators, inhibiting cooperation in school improvement;

- o deficiencies in professional training and support, and
- o the lack of career choices within the profession.

Schools are not currently organized in ways that promote excellence. Some of the organization characteristics that discourage excellence that are presently found in most public schools include the following (ASCD, 1985):

- o Peer-support systems that encourage excellence in other professions are absent in most public schools.
- o Teachers are expected to *act* like professionals but are not *treated* like professionals.
- o Teachers are rarely involved in meaningful discussions and decisions on matters that directly affect their classroom work.
- o Instruction time is reduced because of poor school administration, too many interruptions, too much paper work, and bureaucratic requirements.
- o Teachers have little control over staff development programs.
- o School organization discourages collaboration -- there are no processes for self-directed review and revision.

C. METHODS CAN BE IDENTIFIED FOR INDUCING "POOR" TEACHERS TO LEAVE TEACHING SOONER.

TEACHER EVALUATION

Teacher evaluation procedures will have to be strengthened considerably. Most school districts neither hold teachers accountable for their performance in any meaningful way, nor do they fully address their professional development needs (Bridges & Groves, 1984, Yee, forthcoming --cited in Pfeifer). Administrators often do not formally evaluate their teachers (Natriello, 1983), and teachers indicate that evaluation has little, if any, impact on their performance (Lawton, et al, 1983).

STRATEGY 2

ATTRACTING "HIGHER-QUALITY" ENTRANTS INTO TEACHING FROM THE RANKS OF TALENTED NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES AND FROM THE POOL OF TALENTED PERSONS IN OTHER JOBS.

Problem:

Schlechty and Vance (1982) found that although education does attract and retain a proportionate share of those individuals in the middle rank of academic ability, it attracts *more than a proportionate share* of those students from the lower two ranks and *less than a proportionate share* from the top two ranks.

ASSUMPTIONS:

A. HIGHER TEACHER-PAY SCALES WILL HELP MAKE TEACHING A MORE ATTRACTIVE OCCUPATION.

COLLEGE FRESHMEN POOL

Given the reasons for going to college stated by most of the current college freshmen, the outlook for teaching is dismal unless salaries are brought in line with those of other professions. The 20th annual survey of entering freshmen

found that 1985 college freshmen agreed with the idea that graduating from a higher education institution moves one up the social and economic ladder; 83% of freshmen said college would help them "get a better job" than if they didn't earn a degree (Education Daily, January 13, 1986). A record high of 69.7% said "to be able to make more money" is a very important reason for attending college, while 71.8% agreed that "the chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one's earning power" (NCEI Reports, January 20, 1986).

B. THE "BENEFITS PACKAGE" AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF TEACHERS CAN BE MADE ATTRACTIVE TO THE "HIGHER-QUALITY" COLLEGE GRADUATES.

WORKING CONDITIONS NOT ATTRATICVE TO ACADEMICALLY INCLINED

The ability to recruit and/or to select teachers from among the academically able depends, in large measure, on the ability of the schools to provide a "package" that includes working environments and career opportunities that are attractive to the academically able in the first place (Schlechty & Vance, 1982).

The reasons schools have difficulty in recruiting academically able persons to teach are the same reasons the schools have difficulty retaining the services of these people once they are in the classroom. The academic character of the education required to prepare for teaching and the intellectual nature of the task is contradicted by the isolated, non-scholarly, and non-self-renewing character of the setting in which teaching takes place (Burden, 1985).

Goodlad found that, in general, the practicing teacher functions in a context where the beliefs and expectations are those of a profession but where the realities in actual practice compare more to a trade. It is unrealistic to expect even the

most altruistic individual to choose, when choices are available, a career that offers no opportunity for advancement, where time and activities are so circumscribed and regulated that there is little opportunity for collegial exchange or professional growth, and where the individual has little input into or control over the policies that govern the conduct of his or her professional life.

C. SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE ABLE TO DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN THE LARGE NUMBERS OF "MEDIOCRE" APPLICANTS AND THE "MORE-TALENTED" APPLICANTS AND WILL HIRE THE "MORE TALENTED" APPLICANTS.

SCHOOL DISTRICT HIRING PRACTICES

The public generally assmumes that school districts hire the best and brightest applicants, but the evidence indicates otherwise.

In reviewing numberous studeies of the past 15 years, the ERIC Clearing House on Educational Management at the University of Oregon found that principals and other administrators appear to select their help according to the "old school tie syndrome". They tend to prefer applicants that are similar to themselves -- sometimes at the expense of the "A" student who has outstanding academic and leadership skills.

- From an analysis of the Dallas School District' hiring procedures in 1977, the researchers conculuded that administrators seemed to favor those applicants who failed basic skills tests over those who scored higher.
- A 1981 North Texas State University report discovered that the "best"

candidate (as measured by grade point average, student teaching, and professional recommendations) were not the ones hired most often.

STRATEGY 3

RAISING THE AVERAGE PERFORMANCE OF ALREADY-EMPLOYED TEACHERS BY INDUCING THEM TO UPGRADE OR USE THEIR CAPABILITIES MORE EFFECTIVELY BY PROVIDING INCENTIVE PAY.

ASSUMPTIONS:

A. MOST CURRENTLY EMPLOYED TEACHERS ARE CAPABLE OF TEACHING BETTER THAN THEY TEACH NOW.

ENVIRONMENTALLY INDUCED STRESS REDUCES TEACHING EFFICIENCY

In a study on the sources of teacher stress, Blase (1986) reported that there are certain aspects of the teaching environment that direct teachers' time and energy away from instructional activities. These aspects are identified as "stressors." Stressors in the teaching environment include student discipline problems, student absences, inappropriate scheduling, large classes, administrative interruptions, problems with equipment and the physical plant, meetings that are disorganized, unclear expectations, administrative inconsistency and indecisiveness, lack of preparation time, and lack of materials.

Blase found that teachers cope with these demands on their time and energy in a variety of ways. In order to free up time for planning or correcting papers, teachers often resort to "busy" seat work. Lacking the time to research and

develop new materials, teachers use old materials and techniques over and over again.

Under stress, teachers behave differently toward students. Day-to-day problems seem to affect teachers' abilities to relate to students in a personal, caring manner. They become less tolerant, less patient, and overall, less involved. In order to forestall discipline problems, teachers exercise greater control over instruction by using rote learning, recitation, direct questioning requiring brief answers, and allowing little student-student interaction.

Blase suggests that the positive attitudes and behaviors essential to good teaching seem to be difficult to maintain over the long run. In their place, maladaptive behaviors develop as a result of work stress. He concludes that those committed to improving schools should focus more attention on the complex nature of the organizational aspects of schools that prevent productive teaching and learning.

B. TEACHERS HAVE THE CAPACITY AND THE FREEDOM TO IMPROVE ON THEIR OWN.

TEACHER ISOLATION

In his study of schooling, Goodlad (1984) found that inside schools, teacher-to-teacher links for mutual assistance in teaching or collaborative school improvement were weak or nonexistent, especially in the senior high schools. There are no infrastructures designed to encourage or support teachers either in communicating among themselves to improve their teaching or to collaborate in attacking school-wide problems.

Goodlad found nothing to suggest active, ongoing exchanges of ideas and practices across schools, between groups of teachers, or between individuals even in the same schools. Teachers rarely worked together on school-wide problems; rarely came together in their schools to discuss curricular or instructional changes. The study of schooling found little evidence that principals were exercising instructional leadership; rather, their behaviors seemed generally to reinforce the isolation and autonomy of teachers (Tye & Tye, 1984).

The teachers Goodlad (1984) studied appeared, in general, to function quite autonomously in a context of isolation -- not only from other teachers but also from sources of ideas beyond their own experience. More than 75%, regardless of subject area taught or level of schooling, indicated that they were greatly influenced in what they taught by two sources -- their own background, interests, and experiences, and students' interests and experiences.

Isolation is perhaps the greatest impediment to the professional development of teachers -- to their continued learning or to their improving existing skills -- because most of such learning must occur through trial and error. One alarming consequence of trial-and-error learning is that teachers' professional growth depends solely on their own ability to detect problems and discern solutions. As a result, teachers have no opportunity to benefit from the advice, experience, or expertise of their colleagues; have few models of teaching excellence to emulate; have no standards against which to judge their own teaching behaviors (Rosenholtz, 1985).

C. TEACHERS CAN BE INDUCED TO MAKE THESE PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING CHANGES BY THE OFFER OF PERFORMANCE-CONTINGENT REWARDS.

INCENTIVES TO IMPROVE TEACHER PERFORMANCE

In The Logic of Teacher Incentives, a paper prepared for the National Association of State Boards of Education, Barro (1985) argues that pay incentives based on performance would strengthen teachers' motivation to perform well; that improvement is a matter of the individual teacher's choice. He suggests, "What counts is that there are steps that teachers can take that many teachers have not taken in the absence of performance-contingent rewards but that they might conceivably take when such rewards are introduced." (p. II-14)

MYTH

There is very little agreement with this argument among those who are familiar with teachers or the conditions under which they work. Rosenholtz (1984) deals with the assertion -- or myth, as she calls it -- that teachers will be motivated to teach better simply because there are monetary bonuses available.

> "Underlying this political platitude are several assumptions...that teachers now withhold services from students that they would supply if their salaries were better....[and] the assumption that individual teachers can improve [on their own] if only they are properly motivated." (p. 6)

> "The assumption that, given proper motivation, teachers can improve individually is refuted emphatically by research showing how organizational conditions in schools can hinder individual improvement." (p. 7)

REWARDS OF TEACHING

Teachers' work consists largely of efforts to help other human beings learn and improve. Teachers cannot succeed unless the people with whom they work try to do well. Money is important to teachers, but money is not the key pay off for success in the classroom. Students hold the keys to teachers' success (Cohen & Murnane, 1985).

When polled on the source of the rewards they get from teaching, 66% of the teachers said their professional rewards came mainly from students and helping them learn (Fiske, 1982). When Murnane and Cohen (1985, p. 29) asked teachers what motivated them to do good work, they received such responses as:

- "every once in a while the light bulb goes on in a kid's head;"
- "when I hit, it feels good ... they either make or break you;" and
- "student support is the biggest motivation. The harder they try, the harder I try."

The logic of attempting to improve the quality of the teaching force and the quality of classroom instruction by simply applying the proper financial incentives applies only if you subscribe to Barro's assertion that teachers don't teach as well as they can and could improve if offered enough money as an incentive. This is unlikely considering that teachers' greatest rewards are achieved through helping others achieve. And, given the conditions under which most teachers work, offering performance-rewards to those teachers who are outstanding is not likely to have much effect on the rest.

STRATEGY 4

RAISING THE AVERAGE PERFORMANCE OF ALREADY-EMPLOYED TEACHERS BY PROVIDING BOTH THE INDUCEMENT AND THE STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM TO UPGRADE THEIR CAPABILITIES.

ASSUMPTIONS:

A. MOST CURRENTLY EMPLOYED TEACHERS ARE CAPABLE OF TEACHING BETTER THAN THEY TEACH NOW.

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

A study from Stanford University (Pfeifer, 1986) on the sources of teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction suggests that organizational conditions, more than any lack of expertise on the part of teachers, impede effective teaching and that the effective principal provides support by "enabling" teachers to perform effectively in the classroom. The glamourous roles for principals such as "instructional leader" or "gatekeeper of change" are not universally seen as necessary by teachers in schools that are striving to improve.

In this study, principals seen as effective by teachers first attended to the everyday realities of the organizational life in schools -- by minimizing interruptions and excessive paperwork; insuring the availability of adequate instructional materials; enforcing clear, simple policies; providing opportunities for training; and fostering positive, supportive human relationships.

B. TEACHERS WANT TO IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES BUT DO NOT HAVE THE TIME OR THE OPPORTUNITIES TO DO SO.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A growing body of evidence suggests that teachers often respond positively to alternative methods of teaching when they are given support, encouragement, and protection (Goodlad, 1983).

Teachers feel confidence in the abilities of their fellow teachers -- approximately 90% feel that their colleagues are good teachers (Harris, 1984) -- however, few teachers have the opportunity to take advantage of other teachers' experience, educational practices, and professional advice.

A survey of California teachers (Koppich et al., 1985) found that:

- o while 87% of the teachers believe they would learn from observing other teachers, only 6% regularly do so;
- o while 77% feel they would benefit from being observed by other teachers, only 3% have had that experience;
- o while 92% would like assistance from fellow teachers to solve teaching and disciplinary problems, only 33% receive it; and
- o while 93% would like to be allotted time on the job for consulting with otherteachers about professional matters, only 14% have the time to consult.

C. TEACHERS CAN BE ASSISTED IN MAKING PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING CHANGES BY A VARIETY OF STRUCTURED STAFF DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES.

EVALUATION AND PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Performance evaluation should be viewed as a vehicle for professional improvement and growth. Evaluation coupled with staff development can lower anxiety and increase trust when:

- o teachers understand the practices and procedures that will be used to arrive at evaluative judgements;
- o evaluative criteria are defined in terms rooted in theory and research while at the same time based on the craft knowledge familiar to all teachers; and
- o there is collegiality between teachers and administrators.

When teachers perceive that feedback is offered as a tool for reflection and problem-solving, evaluation fosters professional growth. It removes the adversarial nature of the evaluation process and redefines the role of the evaluator into a "manager of opportunities for professional growth."

A district that truly values improvement, will provide teachers with more than advice, it will make resources available to them to act on evaluation recommendations. By supporting performance feedback with resources, a district communicates to teachers and administrators that it values excellence.

Research suggests that the most effective schools -- where student learning gains are greatest -- are those where professional dialogue and collaboration are encouraged; where teaching is seen as a collective, rather than an individual, enterprise; where analysis, evaluation, and experimentation with one's colleagues set the conditions under which teachers improve (Rosenholtz, 1985).